

## MAGAZINE NOTES.

## MR. ASTOR'S NEW VENTURE.

The first number of "The Pall Mall Magazine," the periodical just established by Mr. William Waldorf Astor in London, has merits uncommon in the first number of any publication. It exhibits the most careful and skilful editing. Its writers have been selected with excellent judgment, the balance of subjects has been admirably maintained, and nothing has been used that has not title to interest and discussion. The illustrations are, with few exceptions, of a kind to which we are not accustomed in initial numbers. Judging by this instalment of its text, the magazine promises to be entertaining but not frivolous, refined but not weak. A sonorous note is struck at the outset in the splendid music of Mr. Swinburne's "Asphodel," a celebration of William Sidney and his "Arcadia."

Ay, then and praised and wept,

Sidney, lord of the stainless sword, the name of

the master that a poet's love kept;

Fast as this did her a sign to light thy life till

it sank and slept.

Mr. Astor contributes a paper on "Madame Recamier's Secret"—one which gives a new and more vivid interest to the most beautiful figure of the most interesting woman of her time. It is accompanied by a reproduction of the most charming of the various portraits. In fiction the number is strong. Miss Rhoda Bringhton, by the way, proves that she can write a short story quite as well as she writes a long one; and Arnold White sits the reader's pulses with a quiet little tale which turns suddenly into a strange and terrible denouement. The Countess of Cork brings an animated indictment against certain fallings of society—fallings which may be found, perhaps, in New-York as well as in London. The lack of good breeding, the never-satisfied craving for excitement, the even unappended spirit of discontent, all of which come under Lady Cork's keen criticism, are certainly not entirely English—but particularly new. One of her illustrations of the decadence in English manners is her anecdote of the two misguided ladies who thought it no sinne, the one to offer by advertisement and the other to accept, the cost of a complete court array as the price of presentation at the Queen's drawing room. For its English renders the magazine provides divers discussions on current English politics and affairs; and there are a few pages of literary chat by Mr. Zangwill. Norman Gale has made his country muse to good effect in this pretty bit of verse:

## A PASTORAL.

Who would shepherd piping flocks  
If there great him dearly  
Cupid in the knee-deep bridle  
Singing sweet and clearly?

Who would make him go,  
Serenely friendless flocks,

If there beat a heart for him  
Under Laura's lace?

As I near the leafy oak,  
Laurel, swift as stinging,  
Brings her cheek for me to stroke—  
Little fragrant bunting!

Take your air of Burton Row,  
Gentleman of pleasure!

Milkmaid kiss and velvet shoe!  
Fashion me my pleasure!

While we sit the silly skies,  
Change from blue to purple,  
And my arm in daring lies  
Round a human serpent circle!

Follow sleepily death;  
Speeding to my heart at night!

Laura's love and beauty!

The magazine announces coming poems and papers by a notable list of writers, among whom are Bayard Kipling, Bret Harte, Paul Bourget and W. E. Norris.

Most of the American magazines of the month deal more or less exhaustively and enthusiastically with the World's Fair. "The Atlantic" being without the resources of illustration treats it philosophically rather than descriptively. Mr. Van Brunt's anticipations of what the exposition is to do for Western civilization are colored by a justifiable pride in American intelligence and a reasonable modesty as regards our achievements. Mr. John Dean Eaton's article on the Chicago of sixty years ago, then the moist wet and uncomfortable of hamlets, ought to be read, for the sake of contrast, by all who mean to visit the great White City this summer. Mr. Greenough's paper on "The English Question" touches upon the mournful inability of the schoolboy and the undergraduate to think clearly, to speak accurately and to accumulate ideas. The narrow-mindedness of the average boy Mr. Greenough attributes to the lack of the old-time imaginative reading, much of which children did not understand, but all of which was good; to the absence of intellectually stimulating talk at home; and to a school and college life crowded with material occupations and interests, which might well be taken up years later. "The lack of clearness in the few ideas which a boy does have," he says, "is due to a dangerous tendency in our educational methods, tenacious to make everything easy." Kindergarten methods, which are necessary when the child is incapable of long continued mental strain, and all years must be in the form of play, has influenced the later school work. Clear, exact reasoning and accurate, careful expression of thought cannot be got by any system which tries to make work into play. Thirty years ago, teachers heard recitations from a textbook, and did very little teaching. This method had many great disadvantages, but it had one advantage: the child had to think for himself, or he learned little, and had to express himself in recitation, or he had no credit. The method was dull, it was dry, and the cause of many tears to the unfortunate pupil. There was nothing inspiring, and nothing to awaken the child's love for the subject studied. In the reaction from this barbarous method, we have been carried too far, and now in the effort to awaken interest, to make the work pleasant, we are tempted to do too much teaching. The children are now held so much that, without the stimulation of a teacher's questions and assistance, their minds refuse to work. The thinking is too often done by the teacher, and only reflected by the class. Such methods make the child's thoughts vague and indistinct. This is particularly noticeable in arithmetic classes, where explanations have to be made over and over again. Here the average boy is very loose in his reasoning. Exact expression or the saying of just what he means is almost impossible to him at first, and can be secured only by constant correction and care on the part of the teacher. When questioned and made to see that what he said was not clear, the boy is surprised that what he said was not what he really meant. He has the idea, but it is so vague that he does not notice how different an idea was conveyed by the words he used.

"After a careful examination of some experiment in physics I have repeatedly asked the class if they understood it, and have been told by each boy in turn that he did, only to find that the majority were incapable of describing the processes and reasoning intelligently. Generally the boy ends with some statement like this: 'I understand it, but I can't express it.' The truth is that all our teaching now is directed toward making the boy understand; but much of it stops there, and does not require him to explain his understanding to others."

"The Century" devotes a goodly share of its space to description, largely pictorial, of the Fair. Mr. Janvier's account of his journey in Provence continues to be whence, genial and poetic. Not all poets are as lucid in their interviews as these singers of the land of flowers. Another and greater singer, Lord Tennyson, is vividly presented in "The Century" pages by the late Mr. Symonds. Among his recollections are these of the poet in contrast with Gladstone: "It is hard to fix the difference between the two men, both with their strong provincial accent—Gladstone with his rich, flexible voice, Tennyson with his deep drawl rising into an impudent falsetto when put out; Gladstone arguing, Tennyson putting in a prejudice; Gladstone asserting rashly, Tennyson relying on impressions; both of them humorous, but the one polished and delicate in repartee, the other broad and coarse and grotesque. Gladstone's hands are white and not remarkable. Tennyson's are huge, unwieldy, fit for moulding clay or dough. Gladstone is a child, and treated Gladstone like a child."

Why has Mrs. Burton Harrison wound up so abruptly her clever little novel? It ends as with a sudden twist round a corner, leaving unexplored many effective situations, and cutting short the development of several interesting characters. Whatever this may be it is not art.

Who is M. F. S. Williams? She has given "The Century" a remarkably illuminative study of a practical man. The magazine has other offerings of fiction, none of it occupying wasted space except Mr. Bailester's. The autobiography of Spivie is depicted in many ways, and not least in its author's innocent revelation of his own opinion of his powers.

"Harper's" opens its treasure-chest this month, not on Chicago, but on its own city. Mr. Janvier's careful paper entitled "The Evolution of New-York" is the first of a number of illustrated articles on Manhattan, Chicago, however, is far from being neglected, for Mrs. Wheeler's description of "A Dream City" is long and picturesque and richly illustrated. Mr. Abbey's

unravelled drawings for "Love's Labor's Lost," have Andrew Lang's text for company; and a superb portrait of Lowell illustrates Professor Norton's paper on his friend. There is special interest for the writer in what is said here of the rapidity and irregularity of Lowell's habit of work.

"Impatience of mind" he wrote in one of his letters, "is my bane . . . I am too prone to impatience." And again, "My great fault is impatience of revision." There was truth in this self-accusation. Many of his poems would have been better, and more sure to last, had he spent time on perfecting their form. Much of his prose was written with the printer's devil waiting in the hall for the finished page, on the college bell about to summon him before the ink of his lecture had had time to dry. The fault was natural to one whose powers were so ready and quick in action, and whose control over his intellectual resources was so complete. When he was at work no one of his faculties refused obedience. His power of concentration of his whole self upon the task in hand was such as I have known in no other man. He came from a spell of work lean as Dante himself, worn but not exhausted; the virtue which had gone out of him was speedily renewed."

"Scribner's Magazine" has been fortunate in securing for its "exhibition number" the heretofore unpublished account by Washington of the Boreas Campaign. It is a simple and many statement, couched here and there in quaint language, and modest to a fault concerning his own part in the expedition. It is graphic as the writings of a man of action are apt to be; and the reader cannot but feel with the writer his impatience at the British commander's stolid and ignorant disregard of all information and advice touching the methods of the Indian fighter. His life paid the penalty.

We have elsewhere referred to Mr. Howells's charming article on the country printer of his early Ohio days. In this paper he has contributed an invaluable chapter to the study of American life and manners. Mr. Frost's illustrations are worthy of the text. This number of "Scribner" is memorable for its brilliant array of fiction and for its wealth of drawings by distinguished artists.

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